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General Assembly

Sixtieth session

Official Records

82nd plenary meeting
Tuesday, 16 May 2006, 4 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Eliasson ..... (Sweden)

The meeting was called to order at 4.30 p.m.

Agenda item 112 (*continued*)

Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections

(f) Election of seven members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission

The President: Today we have had another reminder of the importance of getting the Capital Master Plan through: one day it rains through the roof, another day the sound system does not work. I thank members for their understanding in that regard. I might also observe that it seems that elections bring a full house to the Assembly Hall.

The General Assembly will now take up sub-item (f) of agenda item 112, to elect seven members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission, as provided for in General Assembly resolution 60/261, of 8 May 2006.

As members will recall, the General Assembly and the Security Council decided, through simultaneous resolutions on 20 December 2005, to operationalize the decision by the world summit to establish the Peacebuilding Commission. That, in my view, will be a historic achievement, if we do it the way it was intended. The membership decided to establish a body that would support countries in fragile post-conflict situations, a body that would bring an end to the pattern of relapsing conflicts and a body that would be a strong link — so strongly needed — between security and development.

It is now time for the Peacebuilding Commission to begin its work. We are here today to elect seven members from the General Assembly to its Organizational Committee. By this election, we shall conclude the selection and election process to the Organizational Committee.

The Assembly adopted resolution 60/261, on the election of seven members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission, on 8 May 2006. According to that resolution, the General Assembly shall elect seven additional members, giving due consideration to representation from all regional groups and to countries that have experienced post-conflict recovery. Let me remind the Assembly that this election will not set a precedent for future elections in the distribution of seats among the five regional groups.

The General Assembly will, in one year's time, undertake the first of the annual reviews of the distribution of seats, on the basis of changes in the membership in other categories in the Organizational Committee, in order to give due consideration to representation from all regional groups in the overall composition of the Organizational Committee. Based on that review, the General Assembly will elect, or re-elect, two members to the Committee. In that context, I would also like to refer to resolution 60/261, which provides that each of the five regional groups shall

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have no less than three seats in the overall composition of the Organizational Committee.

In accordance with subparagraphs (a) to (e) of paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 60/180, of 20 December, the Committee shall comprise the following. Seven members will come from the Security Council, including permanent members. In that connection, China, Denmark, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United Republic of Tanzania and the United States of America have been selected by the Council as members.

Secondly, seven members will come from the Economic and Social Council, elected from regional groups. In that connection, Angola, Belgium, Brazil, Guinea-Bissau, Indonesia, Poland and Sri Lanka have been elected by the Council as members.

Thirdly, five members will come from the top providers of assessed contributions to United Nations budgets and of voluntary contributions to United Nations funds, programmes and agencies, including a standing peacebuilding fund. In that connection, the General Assembly has been informed, in document A/60/848, that Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands and Norway have been selected.

Fourthly, five members will come from the five top providers of military personnel and civilian police to United Nations missions. In that connection, the General Assembly has been informed, in document A/60/847, that Bangladesh, Ghana, India, Nigeria and Pakistan have been selected as members.

Fifthly, seven additional members will be elected by the General Assembly, giving due consideration to representation from all regional groups in the overall composition of the Committee, as I have already stated.

As members are aware, as a result of the election and/or selection that has already taken place, in accordance with the provisions of paragraphs 4 (a) to (d) of Assembly resolution 60/180 and the provisions of Security Council resolution 1645 (2005), the distribution of seats so far for this year among the five regional groups in the Committee is as follows: five members from African States, seven members from Asian States, two members from Eastern European States, one member from Latin American and Caribbean States and nine members from Western European and other States.

In resolution 60/261, the General Assembly decided that the additional seven seats for election by the Assembly for membership in the Committee for this year shall be distributed among the five regional groups as follows: two seats for African States, one seat for Asian States, one seat for Eastern European States, three seats for Latin American and Caribbean States and no seats for Western European and other States.

The Assembly reiterated that the members of the Committee shall serve for renewable terms of two years beginning on the day of the first meeting of the Committee. The Assembly also decided that the term of membership shall be staggered and that two members from different regional groups, to be drawn by lots in the first election, shall serve for an additional period of one year.

Before proceeding further, I would like to inform members that we shall first elect the seven members of the Committee. Immediately after the completion of the election, the drawing of lots will be held by the General Assembly, to select from among the members already elected two members from different regional groups that will serve for an initial period of one year.

The General Assembly will now proceed to the election of the seven members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission.

I would like to remind members that, in accordance with paragraphs 4 (a) to (d) of resolution 60/180, Security Council resolution 1645 (2005) and Economic and Social Council resolution E/2006/3, the following States have already been elected and/or selected as members of the Committee: Angola, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, China, Denmark, France, Germany, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, the Russian Federation, Sri Lanka, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United Republic of Tanzania and the United States of America. Those 24 States, therefore, are not eligible in this election.

Members will recall that, in resolution 60/261, the General Assembly decided that the rules of procedure and established practice of the Assembly for the election of members of its subsidiary bodies shall

apply to its selection of members of the Committee. For this election, rules 92 and 94 shall be applicable. Accordingly, the election shall be held by secret ballot and there shall be no nominations.

However, I should like to recall paragraph 16 of General Assembly decision 34/401, whereby the practice of dispensing with a secret ballot for elections to subsidiary organs when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled should become standard unless a delegation specifically requests a vote on a given election.

In the absence of such a request, may I take it that the Assembly decides to proceed to the election on that basis?

It was so decided.

The President: I should like to inform the Assembly that those candidates not exceeding the number of seats to be filled, receiving the greatest number of votes and a majority of those present and voting will be declared elected.

In the case of a tie vote for remaining seats, there will be a restricted ballot limited to those candidates which have obtained an equal number of votes.

May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to that procedure?

It was so decided.

The President: Regarding candidatures of the respective regional groups, the Secretariat has been informed that, for the two seats from among the African States, there are three candidates: Burundi, which has been endorsed by the Group, Egypt and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

For the one seat from among the Asian States, there are two candidates: Fiji and the Philippines.

For the one seat from among the Eastern European States, there are two candidates: Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia.

For the three seats from among the Latin American and Caribbean States, the Group has endorsed three candidates: Chile, El Salvador and Jamaica. Since the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States has endorsed three candidates for the three seats, may I take it that the General Assembly decides to elect those candidates as members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission beginning on the day of the first meeting of the Committee?

Chile, El Salvador and Jamaica were elected members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission beginning on the day of the first meeting of the Committee.

The President: I congratulate Chile, El Salvador and Jamaica and look forward to their contributions to the peacebuilding work.

Since from among the African States there are three candidates for two seats; from among the Asian States there are two candidates for one seat; and from among the Eastern European States there are two candidates for one seat, the General Assembly shall, in accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, proceed to elect by secret ballot two countries from the African States, one country from the Asian States and one country from the Eastern European States as members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission. The ballot papers reflect that pattern.

As stated in resolution 60/261, the General Assembly calls on member States to give due consideration to representation from countries that have experienced post-conflict recovery when electing members of the Committee in the Assembly.

We shall now proceed to the election.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that, pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting.

We shall now begin the voting process.

Ballot papers marked "A", "B" and "C" will now be distributed. I request representatives to use only those ballot papers that have been distributed.

May I ask representatives to write on the ballot papers marked "A", for the African States, the names of the two States for which they wish to vote; on the ballot papers marked "B", for the Asian States, the name of the one State for which they wish to vote; and on the ballot papers marked "C", for the Eastern European States, the name of the one State for which they wish to vote.

I request representatives to use only those ballot papers and to write on them the names of the States for which they wish to vote. A ballot paper containing more names from the relevant region than the number of seats assigned to it will be declared invalid. If a ballot paper contains the names of member States that do not belong to that region, those names will not be counted.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Bijou (Costa Rica), Ms. Espindola (Ecuador), Mrs. Graeter-Nejad (Germany), Ms. Paunksnienė (Lithuania), Mrs. Rahantabololo (Madagascar) and Ms. Halabi (Syrian Arab Republic) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 4.55 p.m. and resumed at 5.50 p.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group A – African Group (two seats)

Number of ballot papers:	190
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	190
Abstentions:	0
Required majority of members present and voting:	96
Number of votes obtained:	
Egypt	158
Burundi	139
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	70
Algeria	1

Group B – Asian Group (one seat)

Number of ballot papers:	190
Number of invalid ballots:	2
Number of valid ballots:	188
Abstentions:	1
Required majority of members present and voting:	94
Number of votes obtained:	
Fiji	108
Philippines	79

Group C – Eastern European Group (one seat)

Number of ballot papers:	190
Number of invalid ballots:	2
Number of valid ballots:	188
Abstentions:	5
Required majority of members present and voting:	92
Number of votes obtained:	
Croatia	119
Bosnia and Herzegovina	64

Having obtained the required majority, the following four States were elected members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission beginning on the day of the first meeting of the Committee:

From the African Group: Burundi and Egypt.

From the Asian Group: Fiji.

From the Eastern European Group: Croatia.

The President: I congratulate the additional seven States — Burundi, Chile, Croatia, Egypt, El Salvador, Fiji and Jamaica — that have been elected by the General Assembly as members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission. I thank the tellers for their assistance in the election.

With the additional seven members elected by the General Assembly, the 31 members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission are as follows: Angola, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Burundi, Chile, China, Croatia, Denmark, Egypt, El Salvador, Fiji, France, Germany, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, India, Indonesia, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, the Russian Federation, Sri Lanka, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United Republic of Tanzania and the United States of America.

The General Assembly will now turn to the drawing of lots — I can tell members that this is one of the unpleasant tasks of the President of the General Assembly — to select, from among the seven elected members, two members, from different regional groups, that will serve for an initial period of one year.

The Secretariat will now hand me an empty domino box; I will turn it upside down to show that it is empty. Tiles marked with the names of the following seven countries will now be put into the box: Burundi, Chile, Croatia, El Salvador, Egypt, Fiji and Jamaica.

Having been drawn by lot by the President, Jamaica, from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, and Croatia, from the Group of

Eastern European States, were chosen to serve on the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission for an initial period of one year beginning on the day of the first meeting of the Committee.

The President: The following five members will serve for an initial period of two years beginning on the day of the first meeting of the Committee: Burundi, Chile, Egypt, El Salvador and Fiji.

I call on the representative of El Salvador.

Mrs. Gallardo Hernández (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the opportunity to take the floor on this historic day, when the members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission have been elected in the General Assembly category. Permit me, on behalf of the Government and the people El Salvador, to express our appreciation for the support received from the Latin American and Caribbean region and from the other countries that have placed their trust in us by electing us as a member of the Committee.

This election is a recognition of our transition from violence to peace, from weapons to words and from pain to hope. The new responsibility we are assuming provides us with the opportunity to repay the international community for its peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts. We dedicate this election to those who unfortunately were victims of the violence in our country and to those Salvadoran men and women who made it possible for us to replace weapons with dialogue.

Every process is different, and the national will must be respected. It is important that all countries unite their vision and efforts with those of other countries that have affirmed that disputes must never again be allowed to be fuelled by violence.

Today, we hope that the Peacebuilding Commission now being established will lead to the creation of space for dialogue, tolerance and respect for human rights following domestic conflict. We also hope that it will alert the international community, including the United Nations system, when new threats to peace and security are perceived and will make it possible to evaluate concrete results achieved on the path towards sustainable development.

Peacebuilding and the strengthening of democracy following internal conflict are demanding processes that require political will, intersectoral participation, civil-society involvement and support from friendly countries in the region.

Once political agreement on peace has been reached, communities need security, justice and development. That is why, within the context of its mandate, the Peacebuilding Commission will have to identify, advise on and integrate the various activities of the United Nations system at the country level and at Headquarters, taking into account the specific characteristics of each situation.

It should be noted that during the post-conflict recovery phase countries must develop their national capacities to carry out their own processes so as to ensure that all national sectors are truly committed to the endeavour in the long term. That is why leadership and ownership of the process are essential if social cohesiveness and concrete development goals are to be achieved.

On the basis of our own experience, we believe that the advice provided by the Peacebuilding Commission will on some occasions need to offset the tendency, which has been noted in certain cases, to impose international partnerships, priorities and programmes upon countries emerging from conflict.

We hope that the Commission will base itself on the good practices of successful processes, working together with donors to ensure that the appropriate material and financial resources are provided in a timely and effective manner, as they are essential when embarking on an integrated peacebuilding strategy.

In that context, we are setting up a body that we believe should create new synergies in coordinating the efforts of the United Nations and of countries that have experienced internal conflict. We hope that its advisory character will make it possible to draw up a peacebuilding road map and to innovate in the way that the resources necessary for its implementation are managed.

Little was said during our discussions on the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission about the psycho-social aspects of post-conflict societies or about the need to ensure that educational programmes are directed towards teaching people about the culture of peace.

Resolution 60/180 provides the United Nations with an intergovernmental advisory body aimed at

structuring the transitional processes in various regions, taking into account requests for advice by the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, with the consent of a concerned Member State.

In conclusion, I should like to emphasize that it will be necessary to set out clear procedures regarding decision-making and the working procedures of the Commission, thereby creating new synergies with the various bodies of the United Nations system.

We trust that our work will be carried out on the basis of consensus. International public opinion hopes that the Commission will have the capacity for understanding, effectiveness and transparency. El Salvador would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to share with the Commission its experience in the area of peace and development.

The President: We have now concluded the election in the General Assembly of members of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission. A further step has been taken in making the Commission operational. The elected or selected 31 members of the Organizational Committee now have a special responsibility to start preparing for the first meeting of the Committee. The Secretary-General will inform members shortly about the date of that first meeting. I trust that informal discussions will start without delay, so that the members of the Organizational Committee can agree on the structures, rules, procedures and working methods at the first meeting, or shortly thereafter. We should aim at starting the country-specific meetings of the Peacebuilding Commission as soon as possible.

Through today's election, we have implemented another mandate of the world summit outcome. Let me take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the leadership demonstrated by the Co-Chairs during the consultations and negotiations on the Peacebuilding Commission: Ambassador Løj of Denmark and Ambassador Mahiga of Tanzania. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for initiating the process in his report "In larger freedom" (A/59/2005), building on a proposal by the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. But above all, I wish to extend my appreciation to all members of the General Assembly for compromising on strongly held views in order to reach a historic decision for the United Nations and for the countries and peoples in urgent need of our support.

In my view, peacebuilding at the country-specific level in the field of the dark realities after conflict is, and must be, an important qualitative step forward for effective multilateralism and for global solidarity. We must be there, including when the television cameras have gone, with reconstruction, development and the setting up of institutions and reconciliation processes led by the countries and peoples concerned.

Finally, let me point out that the General Assembly — all of us, all of you — will hold an annual debate to review the work of the Peacebuilding Commission on the basis of the annual report provided for in resolution 60/180.

Again, I congratulate the members of the Peacebuilding Commission and wish them success in their work in the interests of all of us, particularly those in grave need out there in the field. The realities that we must bring into these halls must always be in front of us.

The General Assembly has concluded its consideration of sub-item (f) of agenda item 112.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items: request for the reallocation of sub-agenda item (a) of agenda item 55

The President: Members will recall that at its 17th plenary meeting, on 20 September 2005, the General Assembly decided to allocate sub-item (a) of agenda item 55 to the Second Committee under heading B, "Promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and recent United Nations conferences".

Members will also recall that sub-item (a) of agenda item 55 remained open for consideration during the sixtieth session.

In order for the General Assembly to proceed expeditiously with the consideration of the draft decision issued as document A/60/L.54 under that sub-item, may I take it that the General Assembly wishes to consider sub-item (a) of agenda item 55 directly in plenary meeting under heading B, "Promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable

development in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and recent United Nations conferences"?

It was so decided.

The President: May I further take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 55?

In the absence of objection, we shall proceed accordingly.

Agenda item 55 (*continued*)

Groups of countries in special situations

(a) Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

Draft decision (A/60/L.54)

The President: The Assembly will now take action on draft decision A/60/L.54, entitled "Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries: high-level meeting on the midterm comprehensive global review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft decision A/60/L.54?

Draft decision A/60/L.54 was adopted.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 55.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.